Prevention Terms Glossary
Southwest Prevention Center

Prevention Terms Glossary[1]

Anecdotal Evidence

Information derived from a subjective report, observation, or example that may or may not be reliable but cannot be considered scientifically valid or representative of a larger group or of conditions in another location.

Benchmark

For a particular indicator or performance goal, the industry (healthcare or non-healthcare) measure of best performance. The benchmarking process identifies the best performance in the industry for a particular process or outcome, determines how that performance is achieved, and applies the lessons learned to improve performance elsewhere.

Capacity Building

Increasing the ability and skills of individuals, groups, and organizations to plan, undertake, and manage initiatives. The approach also enhances the capacity of the individuals, groups, and organizations to deal with future issues or problems.

Case Study

A Case study is a useful tool to collect in-depth program information on a single participant or site and is especially useful in providing information in fundraising efforts. A case study can be the story of one person's experience with a program. To protect privacy, it may be important to change the actual participant's name and other identifying characteristics. Gathering information through a case study may lead to other indications about the program experience.

Community Development

Community Development is indicated by collaborative, collective action taken by local people to enhance the long-term social, economic, and environmental conditions of their community. The primary goal of community development is to create a better overall quality of life for everyone in the community.

Community Readiness

Community Readiness indicates the degree of support for or resistance to identifying substance use and abuse as significant social problems in a community. Stages of community readiness for prevention provide an appropriate framework for understanding prevention readiness at the community and state levels. Community Readiness research is available from the Tri-Ethnic Center for Prevention Research at Colorado State University, http://triethniccenter.colostate.edu/.

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[1] Excerpted from Partners for Substance Abuse Prevention, a SAMHSA/CSAP sponsored program website at
http://preventionpartners.samhsa.gov/resources_glossary_p2.asp

Community-Based Approach

A prevention approach that focuses on the problems or needs of an entire community, be it a large city, a small town, a school, a worksite, or a public place. Other popular approaches include school-based, family-based, environmental prevention.

Coalition

Coalitions are partnerships or collaborations among organizations that require sharing resources and leadership to accomplish common goals on an ongoing basis. Collaboration techniques are essential to achieve increased capacity because they allow community members to identify problems and increase the likelihood that they will reach consensus on goals and implementation strategies. The paramount issue in a full collaboration is the willingness of organizations (or individuals) to enhance one another's capacity for mutual benefits and a common purpose. Usually this requires substantial time commitments, very high levels of trust, and extensive areas of common turf.

Cost-Effectiveness

Cost effectiveness generally answers the question, does the program offer good value for the amount of money spent? Has account financial management and accountability, reporting, program delivery costs as well as program savings been considered. Have you addressed the question of whether alternative methods of delivering the program are more cost effective?

Culturally appropriate

Activities and programs that take into account the practices and beliefs of a particular social or cultural group so that the programs and activities are acceptable, accessible, persuasive, and meaningful.

Data Driven

A process whereby decisions are informed by and tested against systematically gathered and analyzed information.

Data-Collection Instruments

The tools used to collect information. Examples of data-collection instruments include

- surveys
- focus groups
- questionnaires, and
- administrative records.

Direct Observations

Direct observation is a less obtrusive method to gather information about things that can be observed. For example, by visiting a participant's home, you can directly collect information on the physical surroundings. By monitoring program activities or meetings, you can observe who shows up for meetings or the program, how many individuals outwardly participate in a meeting or an activity, how people interact, whether participants can apply the skills that are being taught, and so on.

Early Intervention

Identification of persons at high risk prior to their having a serious consequence, or persons at high risk who have had limited serious consequences related to substance use on the job or having a significant personal, economic, legal, or health/mental health consequence, and providing these persons at high risk with appropriate counseling, treatment, education, or other intervention.

Ecological Model (Theory)

Ecological Theory is a view that behavior is affected by and affecting multiple levels of influence. Five levels of influence have been identified for health-related behaviors and conditions: 1) intrapersonal or individual factors; 2) interpersonal factors; 3) institutional or organizational factors; 4) community factors; and 5) public policy factors. This model can be used to understand and develop interventions for changing behavior.

Environmental Approaches

Environmental approaches are one of the six strategies mandated by the SAPT Block Grant regulations. This strategy establishes or changes community standards, codes, and attitudes and thus influences the incidence and prevalence of substance abuse. Approaches can center on legal and regulatory issues or can relate to service and action-oriented initiatives. Examples include TA to communities to maximize the enforcement of laws governing the availability and distribution of legal drugs; product pricing strategies; and the modification of advertising of alcohol and tobacco.

Environmental Factors

Environmental factors are external or perceived to be external to an individual but that may nonetheless affect his or her behavior. At a narrow level these factors relate to an individual's family setting and relationships. At the broader level, these refer to social norms and expectations as well as policies and their implementation.

Effective

The preponderance of research or program findings is consistent, positive, and clearly related to the intervention.

Evaluation

Evaluation is a process that helps prevention practitioners discover the strengths and weaknesses of their activities so that they can make improvements over time. Time spent on evaluations is well spent because it allows groups to use money and other resources more efficiently in the future. Also, evaluation does not have to be expensive or complicated to be useful. Some evaluations can be done at little or no cost, and some can be completed by persons who are not professional evaluators. Local colleges and universities can be sources of professional evaluation support by persons working on degrees in sociology, educational psychology, social work, biostatistics, public health, and other areas.

Evaluation Instruments

Specially designed data collection tools (e.g., questionnaires, survey instruments, structured observation guides) to obtain measurably reliable responses from individuals or groups pertaining to their attitudes, abilities, beliefs, or behaviors (*Achieving Outcomes*, 12/01).

Experimental Design

A research design involving random selection of study subjects, random assignment of them to control or intervention groups, and measurements of both groups. Measurements are typically conducted before and always after the intervention. The results obtained from such studies typically yield the most definitive and defensible evidence of an intervention's effectiveness.

External Validity

External validity is the extent to which outcomes and findings apply (or can be generalized) to person, objects, settings, or times other than those that were the subject of the study.

Fidelity

Fidellity is the agreement (concordance) between a replicated program model or strategy with the specification of the original. On a continuum of high to low, where high represents the closest adherence to the developer's design, it is the degree of fit between the developer-defined components of a substance abuse prevention intervention and its actual implementation in a given organizational or community setting. In operational terms, it is the rigor with which an intervention adheres to the developer's model.

Generalizability

The extent to which program findings, principles, and models apply to other populations and/or settings.

Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA)

The purposes of this Act are to improve the confidence of the American people in the capability of the Federal Government by systematically holding Federal agencies accountable for achieving program results; to initiate reform with a series of pilot projects in setting program goals, measuring program performance against those goals, and publicly reporting on their progress; to improve Federal program effectiveness and public accountability by promoting a new focus on results, service quality, and customer satisfaction; to help Federal managers improve service delivery, by requiring that they plan for meeting program objectives and by providing them with information about program results and service quality; to improve congressional decision-making by providing more objective information on achieving statutory objectives and on the relative effectiveness and efficiency of Federal programs and spending; and to improve internal management of the Federal Government. Agencies must set specific GPRA goals each year and report on progress in attaining them. See http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/npr/library/misc/s20.html.

Healthy People 2010

Healthy People 2010 is the prevention agenda for the Nation. It is a statement of national health objectives designed to identify the most significant preventable threats to health and to establish national goals to reduce these threats. This agenda was established with a great deal of input from public and private organizations and will be carefully monitored throughout the present decade. A number of prevention goals have been established with respect to substance abuse. See: http://www.health.gov/healthypeople/.

Impact Evaluation

Impact evaluation is a type of outcome evaluation that focuses on the broad, long-term impacts or results of program activities. For example, an impact evaluation could show that a decrease in a community's crime rate is the direct result of a program designed to provide community policing.

Incidence

The number of new cases of a disease or occurrences of an event in a particular time period, usually expressed as a rate, with the number of cases as the numerator and the population at risk as the denominator. Incidence rates are often presented in standard terms, such as the number of new cases per 100,000 population.

Indicated prevention measure

A preventive measure directed to specific individuals with known, identified risk factors.

Indicator

An indicator is a substitute measure for a concept that is not directly observable or measurable (e.g., prejudice, substance abuse). For example, an indicator of "substance abuse" could be "rate of emergency room admissions for drug overdose." Because of the imperfect fit between indicators

and concepts, it is better to rely on several indicators rather than on just one when measuring this type of concept.

A variable that relates directly to some part of a program goal or objective. Positive change on an indicator is presumed to indicate progress in accomplishing the larger program objective. For example, a program may aim to reduce drinking among teens. An indicator of progress could be a reduction in the number of drunk driving arrests or the number of teens found to be drinking alcohol in clubs.

In-Kind Contributions

In-Kind contributions are materials, equipment, services, and even people that are donated to your program efforts. Contributions can be equipment such as computers, software or cooking utensils and office furniture and supplies. It can also be time, such as a computer programmer who donates his or her time. To count as revenue, these donations must be quantifiable.

Intermediate Outcomes

In a sequence of changes expected to occur in a science-based program, the changes that are measured at program completion. Depending on the theory of change guiding the intervention, an intermediate outcome in one intervention may be an immediate or a final outcome in another.

Intervention

An intervention is an activity or set of activities to which a group is exposed in order to change the group's behavior. In substance abuse prevention, interventions may be used to prevent or lower the rate of substance abuse or substance abuse-related problems.

Measures

The tools used to obtain the information or evidence needed to answer a research question. They are similar to indicators, but more concrete and specific. Often an indicator will have multiple measures. Indicators are statements about what will be measured; measures answer the question about exactly how will it be measured.

Merger

A merger is the legal consolidation of two or more organizations into one entity.

Moderating

A term that describes a third variable's relationship to a dependent and an independent variable, in which the third variable partitions the independent variable into subgroups that establish its domains of maximal effectiveness in regard to the dependent variable. The moderator may be qualitative or quantitative, and it affects the direction and/or strength of the relation between the independent and the dependent variable. Within an ANOVA framework, the moderator effect can

be represented as an interaction between an independent variable and a factor that specifies particular conditions for its effect.

Any subjective or objective departure from a state of physiological or psychological well-being. (Sickness, illness, and morbid condition are synonyms in this sense.) Also, an actuarial determination of the incidence and severity of sicknesses and accidents in a well-defined class or classes of persons.

Mortality

An actuarial determination of the death rate at each age as determined from prior experience

Multi-Component Program

Multi-component program is a prevention program that simultaneously uses multiple interventions that target one or more substance abuse problems. Programs that involve coordinated multiple interventions are likely to be more effective in achieving the desired goals than single-component programs and programs that involve multiple but uncoordinated interventions.

Needs Assessment

Activities that include surveys of various targeted populations, assessment of prevention resources within the state, studies of current outcome indicators, geodemographic analyses of social marketing data, and household and school surveys. CSAP has supported 27 States in various needs assessment activities and methodologies for the past 4 years, helping them to target their prevention programming dollars by providing sound data on specific populations and localities and identifying distribution of particular risk factors.

Non-Profit Organization

A non-profit organization is one that is organized for an educational, charitable, cultural, religious, social, or athletic purpose. A nonprofit organization can be in business and make money, but any profits must be used for the organization's objectives and not for distribution to members.

Organizational Effectiveness

Having the structures and systems in place to allow an agency to grow, adapt, innovate, and take advantage of new opportunities resulting in improved internal processes and external outcomes for its clients.

Outcome

The extent of change in targeted attitudes, values, behaviors, or conditions between baseline measurement and subsequent points of measurement. Depending on the nature of the intervention and the theory of change guiding it, changes can be immediate, intermediate, final, and longer-term outcomes. For example, changes in attitudes and values may be the final outcome of an

informational intervention. However, changes in attitudes and values may be the immediate outcome of a parenting program that builds on those changes to bring about changes in communication patterns and other skills (intermediate outcomes). Changes in communication patterns would, in turn, strengthen middle school children's resistance to negative peer pressure (intermediate outcome), resulting in a delay in the onset of substance use (final outcome).

Outcome Evaluation

A type of evaluation used to identify the results of a program's effort. It seeks to answer the question, what difference did the program make? It yields evidence about the effects of a program after a specified period of operation.

Outcome Measures

Assessments that gauge the effect or results of services provided to a defined population. Outcomes measures include the consumers' perception of restoration of function, quality of life, and functional status, as well as objective measures of mortality, morbidity, and health status.

Participatory Evaluation

Participatory evaluation is the process of engaging stakeholders in an evaluation effort. (Typical stakeholders - the people most invested in the success of a program - include staff, board members, volunteers, sister agencies, and funders.) Getting input from your stakeholders at all stages of your evaluation effort - from deciding what questions to ask, to collecting data, to analyzing data and presenting results - is critical to the usefulness and ultimate value of the evaluation. A participatory approach to evaluation gets the "buy-in" of as many stakeholders as possible so that they have a feeling of ownership over evaluation results. This helps to create an atmosphere where people want to learn about how and why programs are achieving results.

Partnership

A partnership is a relationship where two or more parties, having common and compatible goals, agree to work together for a particular purpose and/or for some period of time.

Prevalence

The number of all new and old cases of a disease or occurrences of an event during a particular time period, usually expressed as a rate, with the number of cases or events as the numerator and the population at risk as the denominator. Prevalence rates are often presented in standard terms, such as the number of cases per 100,000 population.

Prevention

Prevention is a proactive process that empowers individuals and systems to meet the challenges of life events and transitions by creating and reinforcing conditions that promote healthy behaviors and lifestyles. The goal of substance abuse prevention is the fostering of a climate in which (a)

alcohol use is acceptable only for those of legal age and only when the risk of adverse consequences is minimal; (b) prescription and over-the-counter drugs are used only for the purposes for which they were intended; (c) other abusable substances (e.g., aerosols) are used only for their intended purposes; and (d) illegal drugs and tobacco are not used at all.

Prevention Types (Universal, Selected, Indicated)

Universal prevention measures are desirable for everyone in the eligible population, both general and specific groups. Often such measures can be applied without professional advice or assistance. The benefits outweigh the risks and costs for everyone. Examples of universal prevention include use of seatbelts, a good diet, avoidance of smoking, immunization. Selected prevention is desirable only when the individual is a member of a subgroup whose risk of becoming ill is above average. Subgroups can be based on age, gender, occupation, or family history. An example of selective prevention would be immunization against yellow fever for some travelers; another is breast cancer examinations at young ages for those with a family history of breast cancer. Indicated prevention is for persons who have a risk factor, condition, or abnormality that places them at high risk for future development of the disease. Examples are various screening programs for particular diseases such as HIV testing and needle exchange programs for injected-drug users.

Principles of Effectiveness (U.S. Department of Education

According to the Department of Education, to ensure that recipients of Title IV funds use those funds in ways that preserve State and local flexibility and are most likely to reduce drug use and violence among youth, a recipient shall (1) base its programs on a thorough assessment of objective data about the drug and violence problems in the schools and communities served; (2) with the assistance of a local or regional advisory council where required by the SDFSCA, establish a set of measurable goals and objectives and design its programs to meet those goals and objectives; (3) design and implement its programs for youth based on research or evaluation that provides evidence that the programs used prevent or reduce drug use, violence, or disruptive behavior among youth; and (4) evaluate its programs periodically to assess its progress toward achieving its goals and objectives, and use its evaluation results to refine, improve, and strengthen its program, and to refine its goals and objectives as appropriate.

Process Evaluation

Process evaluation focuses on how a program was implemented and operates. It identifies the procedures undertaken and the decisions made in developing the program. It describes how the program operates, the services it delivers, and the functions it carries out. It addresses whether the program was implemented and is providing services as intended. However, by additionally documenting the program's development and operation, it allows an assessment of the reasons for successful or unsuccessful performance and provides information for potential replication.

Process Measures

Measures of participation, "dosage," staffing, and other factors related to implementation. Process measures are not outcomes, because they describe events that are inputs to the delivery of an intervention

Program

A coordinated set of activities designed to achieve specific objectives over a period of time

Program Evaluation

Program evaluation is the systematic collection of information to answer important questions about activities, characteristics, and outcomes of a program. Evaluation stages include design, data collection, data analysis and interpretation, and reporting.

Promising Program

In CSAP's terminology, the first of three categories of science-based programs on a continuum that concludes with model programs. Promising programs are those that have been reasonably good enough for the program to qualify as an effective program. CSAP's hope is that promising programs, through additional refinement and evaluation, will evolve into effective and model programs.

Protective Factors

Protective factors are those characteristics that may strengthen resilience and thus guard against the occurrence of a particular problem.

Proxy Measures

Data that can be used as an indicator -- an indirect measure of of substance use or abuse. In general, multiple indirect measures (proxies) are more reliable than a single proxy.

Public Health Model

A model that represents the interactions among the agent, host, and environment. In substance abuse prevention, the agent is alcohol or drugs or the sources, supplies, and availability of alcohol and drugs. Hosts can be seen as the potential and/or active substance users. The environment is the social climate that encourages and supports the potential and/or actual use of substances. The public health model posits that all of these factors must be addressed together for prevention to be effective.

Quantitative Data

Quantitative data is numeric information that includes things like personal income, amount of time, or a rating of an opinion on a scale from 1 to 5. Even things that you do not think of as quantitative, like feelings, can be collected using numbers if you create scales to measure them. Quantitative data is used with closed-ended questions, where users are given a limited set of possible answers to a question. They are for responses that fall into a relatively narrow range of possible answers.

Qualitative Data

Qualitative data is a record of thoughts, observations, opinions, or words. Qualitative data typically comes from asking open-ended questions to which the answers are not limited by a set of choices or a scale. Examples of qualitative data include answers to questions like, how can the program be improved? or What did you like best about your experience? – used only if the user is not restricted by a pre-selected set of answers. Qualitative data is best used to gain answers to questions that produce too many possible answers to list them all or for answers that you would like in the participant's own words. Qualitative data is more time-consuming to analyze than quantitative data.

Random Sampling

Random sampling is a process by which the people in a sample are chosen at random from a given population. For example in a population of 100 people, everyone can be assigned a unique number, then the numbers are put in a hat, and 40 numbers are drawn to choose 40 people to be in that sample. These are the people from whom you would collect information. In a random sample, all of the people in the population have an equal chance of being chosen.

Resilience

Resilience is either the capacity to recover from traumatically adverse life events and other types of adversity and achieve eventual restoration or improvement of competent functioning or the capability to withstand chronic stress and to sustain competent functioning despite ongoing stressful and adverse life conditions.

Risk Factors

Risk factors are characteristics associated with potential substance abuse problems. However, they are not necessarily the cause of the problem.

Safe and Drug-Free Schools (SDFS)

SDFS is the Federal government's primary vehicle for reducing drug, alcohol and tobacco use, and violence, through education and prevention activities in our nation's schools to ensure a disciplined environment conducive to learning. These initiatives are designed to prevent violence in and around schools, and to strengthen programs that prevent the illegal use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, involve parents, and coordinate with related Federal, State, and community efforts and resources. The Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program consists of two major programs: State

Grants for Drug and Violence Prevention Programs and National Programs. State Grants is a formula grant program that provides funds to State and local education agencies, as well as to Governors, for a wide range of school- and community-based education and prevention activities. National Programs carries out a variety of discretionary initiatives that respond to emerging needs. Among these are direct grants to school districts and communities with severe drug and violence problems, program evaluation, and information development and dissemination.

The Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program (SDFS) of the U.S. Department of Education is also launching an expert panel process to identify, validate, and recommend to the Secretary of Education those programs that should be promoted nationally as promising and exemplary. This Expert Panel oversees a valid and reliable process for identifying exemplary school-based programs that promote safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools. Once programs are designated as exemplary or promising, the Department will disseminate information about the programs and will encourage their use in new sites. The [Expert Panel initiative](#) is a way of enhancing prevention programming by making schools aware of alternative programs that have proven their effectiveness when judged against rigorous criteria.

Science-Based Prevention

A process in which experts use commonly agreed-on criteria for rating research interventions and come to a consensus that evaluation research findings are credible and can be substantiated. From this process, a set of effective principles, strategies, and model programs can be derived to guide prevention efforts. This process is sometimes referred to as research- or evidence-based. Experts analyze programs for credibility, utility, and generalizability. Credibility refers to the level of certainty concerning the cause and effect relationship of program to outcomes. Utility refers to the extent to which the findings can be used to improve programming, explain program effects or guide future studies. Generalizability refers to the extent to which findings from one site can be applied to other settings and populations. Definition source: http://www.ccapt.org/scibase.html

Lists of science-based programs are beginning to appear in CSAP and other Internet sites, notably in the Centers for the [Application of Prevention Technologies](#).

Secondary Prevention

Prevention activities designed to intervene when risk factors or early indicators of substance abuse, such as marital strife or poor school performance, are present. This also refers to prevention strategies designed to lower the rate of established cases of a disorder or illness in the population (prevalence).

Stakeholders
A stakeholder is someone who has a stake in an organization or a program. Stakeholders either affect the organization/program or are affected by it. Stakeholders include people who staff a program (e.g., management, staff); people who are affected by a program (e.g., clients, their families, and the community); people who contribute to a program in other ways (e.g., contributors, funding agencies and foundations, volunteers, partner organizations, board members, etc.); and people with a vested interest in the program (e.g., politicians, neighbors, etc.).

Strategic Planning

A deliberate set of steps that

- assess needs and resources;
- define a target audience and a set of goals and objectives;
- plan and design coordinated strategies with evidence of success;
- logically connect these strategies to needs, assets, and desired outcomes; and
- measure and evaluate the process and outcomes.

Strategy

Strategies are types of activities (e.g., policy) that can be implemented to achieve specific objectives and for which a strong evidence base may or may not exist.

Surveys

Surveys are a useful tool for gathering statistical information. Surveys are used to get a general idea of a situation, to generalize about a population. or to get a total count of the aspects concerning a group of people. The information gathered is limited and easier to analyze and offers little or no explanation about the reasons behind the results. Surveys are useful for evaluations that deal with things other than the success of the program (e.g., If an evaluation is in part to identify barriers to participating in the program, questions on a survey may ask about access to transportation, childcare, etc.). A census is an example of a survey.

Tertiary Prevention

Intervention, also known as treatment, that seeks to address symptoms of substance abuse and prevent further problems. It also refers to strategies designed to decrease the amount of disability associated with an existing disorder or illness.

Universal Prevention Measure

A preventive measure directed to a general population or general subsection of the population not yet identified on the basis of risk factors, but for whom prevention activity could reduce the likelihood of problems developing.

Wraparound Services

Services that address consumers' total healthcare needs in order to achieve health or wellness. These services "wrap around" core clinical interventions, usually medical. Typical examples include such services as financial support, transportation, housing, job training, specialized treatment, or educational support